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30 December 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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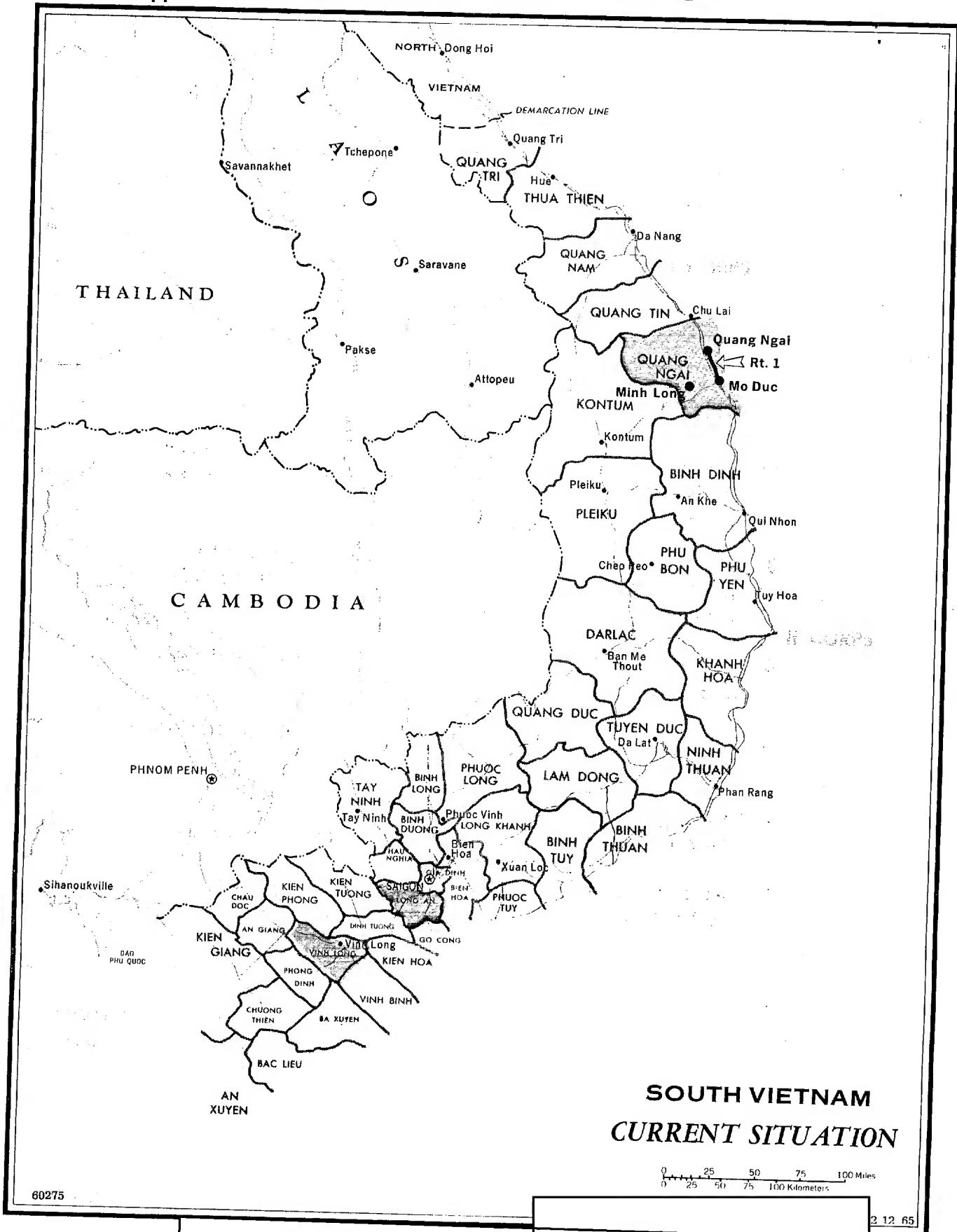
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

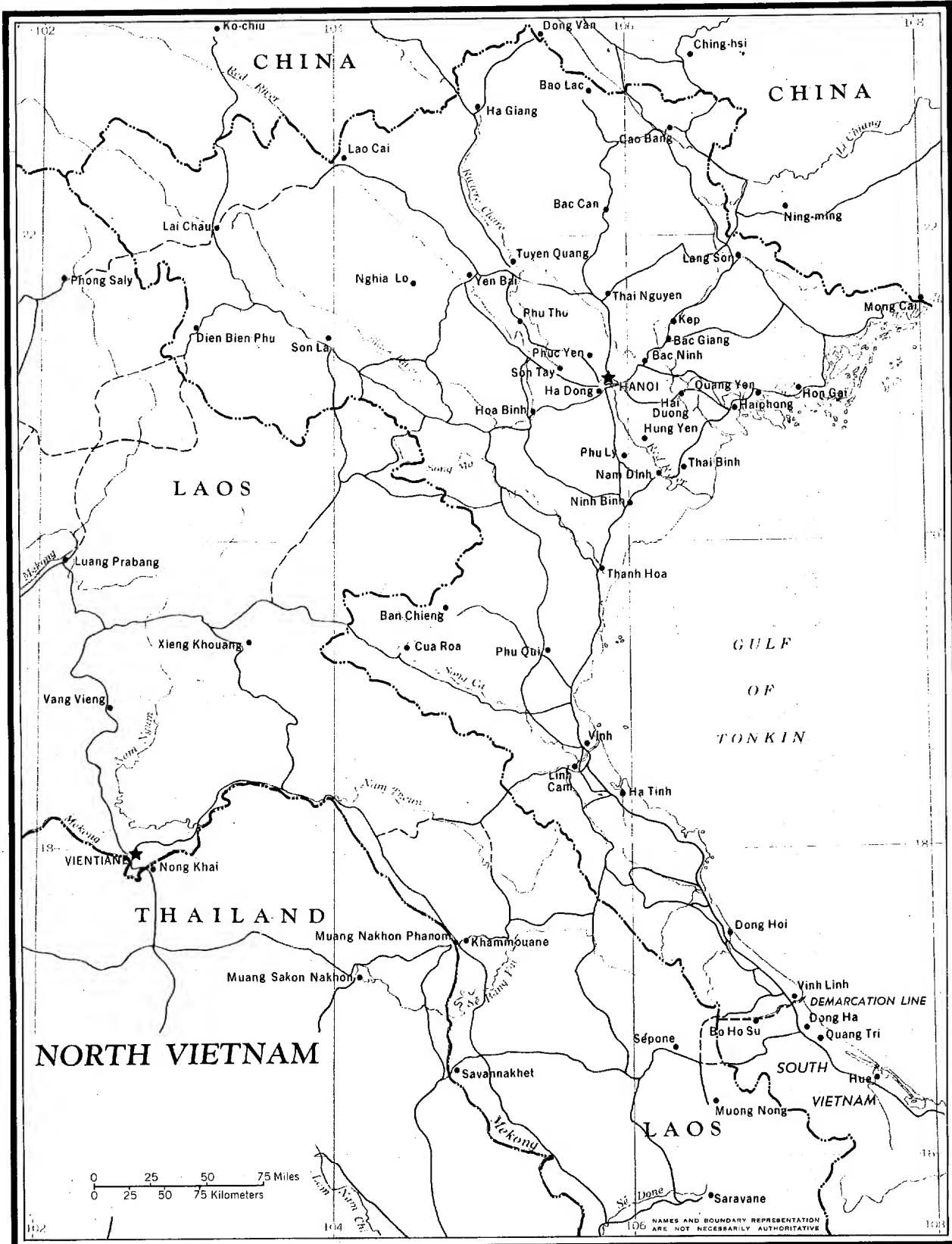
The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Viet Cong activity yesterday centered in the coastal province of Quang Ngai, where enemy forces overran the district headquarters of Minh Long after apparently staging a diversionary attack nearby and blocking a potential route for relief forces.

A forward air controller reported the district headquarters at Minh Long deserted at midday, but directed tactical air strikes on Communist troops observed in the vicinity. Fifty Viet Cong were estimated killed. Government and civilian casualties sustained during the enemy attack are not available. At last report, government troops were preparing to move into the area.

Earlier, Viet Cong forces had directed light mortar fire on the nearby district town of Mo Duc and inflicted at least moderate casualties on government units guarding three bridges along Route 1 between Mo Duc and the provincial capital, Quang Ngai city. There were no casualties reported in the district town, but the bridges were destroyed.

In the delta area, Communist forces yesterday overran a government outpost in Vinh Long Province, inflicting heavy casualties on its defenders. Small scale activity continued yesterday in Long An Province, where seven government outposts reported enemy harassing fire or light probing action. There were no government casualties suffered during this series of actions.

Political Developments in South Vietnam: South Vietnamese officials have reportedly hinted that they



will observe a tacit cease-fire during the upcoming lunar new year holidays, but are publicly asserting their doubts in the good faith of the Communists. Foreign Minister Tran Van Do yesterday described his government as firmly opposed under present conditions to any formal cease-fire or official peace negotiations, but did not rule out Saigon's willingness to engage in "corridor discussions." In addition, Premier Ky recently declared that his government would never yield to the military or political presence of the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.

Communist Political Developments: In a 28 December reply to a Christmas message from Pope Paul, North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh again reiterated Hanoi's basic stand on a settlement in Vietnam. Ho's reply, broadcast by Hanoi radio on 29 December, charged that US leaders "want war and not peace." President Johnson's statements about unconditional negotiations, Ho asserted, "are merely a maneuver to cover up his plan" for further intensification and escalation of the war. To restore peace in Vietnam, he stated, the US must "completely and unconditionally end its bombings and all acts of war against the DRV;" it also must stop the "aggression" in South Vietnam, withdraw US troops, and let the Vietnamese settle their own affairs.

Ho's call for complete cessation of US "war" acts against the DRV echoes the continuing Hanoi charges that American aircraft are still carrying out "provocative" flights over North Vietnam. Hanoi assailed alleged US overflights of two of its southern provinces on 28 December in a protest yesterday to the ICC.

Neither Hanoi nor Peking has yet mentioned the upcoming Shelepin visit to the DRV. The Chinese, however, appear to be growing increasingly nervous over the possible expansion of Soviet influence with the North Vietnamese. In a People's Daily article yesterday, the Chinese leveled a strong new blast at Moscow's calls for "united action" by the bloc on

Vietnam, and charged that the Soviets are trying with such tactics to sow dissension and undermine the friendship between the Chinese and Vietnamese. It is probable that Peking's ire has been raised in part by the recent warm propaganda interchanges between Moscow and Hanoi following the visit of the DRV economic delegation to the USSR earlier this month.

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Panama: Student demonstrations against the US presence in Panama are likely on the anniversary of the anti-US riots of 9-11 January 1964.

Probably with an eye to the anniversary, National Assembly deputy Carlos Ivan Zuniga has attacked the canal issue once again. Zuniga is a pro-Communist demagogue who is one of the most effective members of the assembly.

He is apparently seeking to indict the Robles government for allowing the training of Latin American military officers at US installations in the Canal Zone. In an interview on 25 December, he charged that special schools in the Zone are used to educate military leaders who are "predisposed to maintain unpopular and antidemocratic governments in the hemisphere." Zuniga maintained that the Hay - Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1903, governing US administration of the Zone, does not provide for such training facilities or for what he called the "military headquarters for all Latin America."

Zuniga's anti-US strictures will find a receptive audience among Panamanian student groups. Widespread suspicion that the current US-Panamanian negotiations will result in less than full recognition of Panama's "sovereignty" over the Canal Zone provides a ready-made issue for Panamanian leftists and ultranationalists.

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*Guatemala: The Guatemalan Communist Party terrorist arm--the FAR--may begin terrorist acts against US and Guatemalan military personnel [today] *in the near future* according to US Embassy sources.

Reportedly the terrorists will also attempt to bomb selected installations in Guatemala City, possibly including the US Embassy. While these activities are not *directly* [definitely] related to the current coup plots, renewed terrorist acts, by causing a breakdown in public security, could embarrass and further weaken the government thereby hastening a rightist coup attempt.

On 31 December
[Last year at this time] terrorists bombed the US AID garage destroying it and [more than twenty] vehicles.

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USSR: The Kremlin's choice of party secretary Aleksandr Shelepin to head its forthcoming mission to Hanoi is further evidence of his high standing in the Soviet hierarchy. Statements by high Soviet officials following Shelepin's release from his governmental duties early this month suggested that the move to full-time party work may have been a step upward for the ambitious young party leader. Reports at the time that Shelepin had become Brezhnev's "deputy" or the "number two man" on the secretariat are still not confirmed, but the choice of Shelepin for the delicate Hanoi mission indicates that he has the confidence of the Soviet leadership.

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UK-Rhodesia: The most recent Gallup poll shows the strongest support to date for Prime Minister Wilson's "get tough" policy toward the Rhodesian rebel regime. The poll, taken after the government's imposition of an oil embargo, shows 59 percent approving Wilson's policy. In a supplemental poll, 39 percent thought Wilson's policy was about right, 34 percent not strong enough, and only 14 percent favored more moderate action. These results will strengthen Wilson's hand in instituting any additional punitive measures against the Smith regime and will blunt the force of opposition criticism of his Rhodesian policy.

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*Dominican Republic: [Garcia Godoy has not yet announced any steps he may take in the aftermath of the fighting in Santiago, despite having indicated to Ambassador Bennett that he hoped to do so last night. The President, who is conscious of the tense situation, is thinking of moving against both the rebels and the regular military. Such measures--which might include the replacement of air force chief De Los Santos and the closure of the rebel military camp--would probably provoke dissatisfaction on both sides as the two factions are intent on obtaining vindication of their own roles in the fray.]

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